

8

THE

A R T

OF

J O K I N G



Smilewell (Samuel) pen
K

T H E
A R T of J O K I N G;
O R, A N
E S S A Y on W I T T I C I S M;
I N T H E M A N N E R O F
M r. P O P E's E S S A Y on C R I T I C I S M:
W I T H
P r o p e r E x a m p l e s t o t h e R i f i b l e R u l e s.
T O W H I C H I S A D D E D
T h e L A W S o f L A U G H I N G,
A N D T H E
C O N T R A S T,
O R
A J o k e a n d a J e s t,
I n s m a l l c o m p a s s e x p r e s s t.

L O N D O N.

Printed for JOSEPH DEVEULLE, Bookseller, No. 14,
Coventry-street, near the Hay-market,



To

The Laugh-loving Tribe

This Work we inscribe,

And hope 'twill give birth

To innocent mirth,

Which is all the Desire

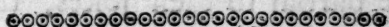
Of

Comus's Squire.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



A N
E S S A Y
O N
W I T T I C I S M.



TIS hard to say, if greater want of
skill
Appears in joking, or retorting ill,
But of the two, less dang'rous is th' offence
To raise a titter, than a fray commence.
Some few in that, but numbers err in this,
To one vile jest, there's ten retorts amiss.

B 2

Into

Into good humour jokes might once sur-
prise,

Now one small gibe brings many harsh
replies.

Our jests are like our mistresses, for none
Please just alike, yet each admires his own.
In jokers as politeness is but rare,
Candour as seldom is the jokee's share;
Both with good humour should alike be
blest,

These born to bear, as well as those to jest;
Let such jeer others, who can jesting take,
And rally freely for amusement's sake.

Jokers are partial to their jokes, 'tis true,
But are not * jokees to their answer too?

Yet

* Jokee, a person joked upon—I beg the critick's pardon for
taking the liberty to coin this word, but I could not find any
already made which would suit my purpose so well; besides, I
have a precedent in *jestibus*.

A country fellow being called as an evidence in a court of ju-
dicature, in a cause where the terms of *mortgager* and *mortgagee*
were

Yet if we look more closely we shall find
Most have the seeds of humour in their
mind,

From childhood in sarcastic jeers delight,
And wou'd be thought to repartee aright;
But as the brightest joke may be misplac'd,
Or by ill-timing totally disgrac'd *,
So by ill-nature is a jest defac'd.

A pedant term the heat of humour cools,
And some great wits have jok'd themselves
to fools;

These

were frequently used, the judge asked him if he knew the difference between the *mortgager* and *mortgagee*? Yes, said he, it is the same as between *nodder* and *noddee*; How is that replied the judge?—Why, you sit there my Lord, said the clown, and I nod at you, then I am the *nodder*, and your Lordship the *noddee*.

* The King of Prussia having invited the French general officers, and other prisoners of rank, to sup with him, the evening of the memorable battle of November the 5th, 1757, made an apology for his not treating them in the manner he could wish, by saying, *really, gentlemen, I did not expect so much good company so soon.*—This was certainly a jest misplaced, since the King's compliment was but bad sauce to a good supper.

These, sooner than their jest, wou'd lose
their friend;

Those ancient puns with modern humour
blend;

All burn alike who can or cannot joke,
Who squeak like eunuchs, or like ravens
croak;

Blockheads, like wits, are willing to decide,
And think themselves upon the laughing
side.

If *Shelbeare* takes his own joke for the best,
There are who pun still worse than he can
jest.

Some have at first for drolls, then punsters,
past,

Turn'd biters next, and dullards prov'd at
last.

Some neither can for drolls nor biters pass,
But must as butts be rank'd in folly's class;
Those water-gruel wits, who make us smile,
To find their jokes upon themselves recoil:

Insu-

Insipid things ! one knows not what to call,
 Unless that each is term'd a joker's ball ;
 A hundred strokes wou'd scarce their pati-
 ence tire,
 Or make them from the fight of words re-
 tire ;
 But you who wou'd sarcastic merit claim,
 And justly bear a merry joker's name,
 Befure your mirth-exciting talents know,
 How far your skill in repartee can go ;
 Time well your blow that you may hit
 your mark,
 And know your company, and know your
 spark.*

Reason

* Dr. H——d being very much indebted to several gentle-
 men of his parish, on their desiring payment, and after having
 been very pressing a long time for their money, he at last told
 them it was out of his power to comply with their demands,
 but if they pleased on the following Sunday to favour him with
 their company at church, he would then propose something
 which he hoped they would not be averse to ; accordingly they
 went,

Reason to all things shou'd the limits set ;
 Then never aim to make the aged fret ;
 Nor rashly give unnecessary pains
 To him whose breast with woe already
 plains ;

[For the most brilliant wit cannot prevail,
 Where tenderness and social manners fail ;
 Want of benevolence when jokes betray,
 The cruel cloud eclipses wit's bright ray ;
 Good-humour only will the jester fit,
 So vast is spleen, so hard a mean to hit ;
 Not only bounded to the general jest,
 But the peculiar shou'd in smiles be drest ;

By

~~~~~

went, and the Dr. chose for his text the following words,  
*"Have patience and I will pay you all."* He divided his sermon  
 into two parts, and made a most excellent discourse on the first  
 part, *"Have patience"*—when coming to the second, *"I will pay  
 you all,"* he closed his book, and very gravely told them, *He  
 must defer that to another opportunity.* The Doctor certainly knew  
 his company, for some surly fellows upon such an occasion  
 would have retorted with a writ.

By one harsh joke which makes the worthy  
fore,

We lose the fame good nature gain'd before;

A real wit is sure to gain renown;

When polish'd smiles his pointed satires  
crown.

First follow nature, that attractive dame ;

A simple elegance will merit fame.

Embellishments of art are not so bright,

As modest nature's unaffected light ;

A studied jest some pleasure may impart ;

Spontaneous nature wins both head and  
heart ;

The real wit from nature's store provides,

Aims without malice, without spleen derides ;

So in some fair machine of curious make,

The wheels their motion from the artist  
take ;

And while the artist is perhaps unknown,

The curious movement seems as if their  
own.

Some

Some who have wit, and in *bon-mots* delight,  
Want twice as much to aim their jest aright;  
For wit and sense together seldom meet,  
Though meant concomitants like light and  
heat;

The manner of a gift more joy bestows  
Than from the gift itself, though costly,  
flows;

A great effect from well-aim'd jests we find,  
Which mend at once and gratify the mind.\*

The ancient rustic jest is nature still,  
But Nature only in her dishabille.

The

William the Conqueror having a tedious fit of illness that confined him to his chamber a great while, the French King said scoffingly to his courtiers, "*The King of England lies very long in child-bed;*" of which being told, he merrily answered, "*When I am church'd, there shall be a thousand lights in France,*" alluding to the tokens women were used to carry when they were church'd in Popish countries; and he made his words good, for presently after his recovery he wasted the French frontiers with fire and sword. *Contemptuous jests are often attended with magical consequences.*



The modern jests most pointed and most  
priz'd,

Are nature drest, but not by art disguis'd.

The vulgar ear Hibernia's jests delights,  
Who turns to blunder all her merry flights ;  
She knew incongruous jests wou'd please  
the croud,

So gave her sanction, and those bulls  
allow'd.

Behold her sons perpetually mistake,

And one idea for another take ;

But of ungrateful to avoid the slur,

They give to us what they derive from her.

Imported bulls the grinning rabble please,

Hibernian lawyers blunder for their fees ;

Hibernian actors blunder on the stage,

And, while derided, look immensely sage.

The English, proud what's bad to imitate,

In Irish accent British blunders prate ;

Against Hibernia's sons her weapons turn,

And at the mighty blunder-masters spurn ;

So

So when a master-painter shews his skill,  
Vile daubers copy, and expression kill ;  
*Bold with conceit concerning taste they prate,*  
*And at each word dash out some master trait.*  
Some all their wit in jingling puns convey ;  
The dull are much less troublesome than  
they ;  
And some there are who never made a joke,  
Give rules to jest, and how they should be  
spoke.  
*Those tortur'd sense with cramp expressions*  
*screw,*  
*And these teach others what themselves ne'er*  
*knew.*  
You then who wou'd with jests politely  
please,  
To pointed wit join elegance and ease \*

## Decorum

•••••

\* In the following jest, good sense, politeness, humanity, and delicacy, all combine to make it excellent.

King





Peculiar charms a jest from manner gain,  
 Ambiguous terms the mode of speech explain;

*From time and place* each stroke of wit receives

Beauties that brilliancy itself ne'er gives:  
 If where the joke not far enough extends,  
 (For real jokes have always certain ends)  
 Persons not pointed at conceive disgust,  
 The cap they merit—to bestow is just.  
 A man of sense, a nearer way to take,  
 May artfully decline the beaten tract;  
 The pointed jest of common dress disrobe,  
 And seem to heal the wound he means to probe.

A veteran jester may sometimes offend  
 Against the maxims by experience penn'd;  
 But let no vulgar wit such things attempt,  
 Or fancied fame will sink into contempt.

Born

Born to deceit, and practis'd in disguise,  
 Good-humour'd jokes the wits of France  
 despise;  
 For with an easy air they level best  
 The poignant sneer, and complimental  
 jest. \*  
 Malicious praise that gives the keenest  
 smart,  
 And panegyric that corrodes the heart;  
 All decent thoughts their double meaning  
 crush,  
 Effect the ill,—yet not excite a blush;

\*\*\*\*\*

\* Doctor South one morning visiting a gentleman, was asked to stay dinner, which he accepting of, the other stepped into the next room, and told his wife he had invited the doctor to dinner, and desired she would provide something extraordinary; here-upon she began to murmur and scold, and made a thousand words, till at last her husband, provoked, protested if it was not for the stranger in the next room he would kick her out of doors, upon which the Doctor, who had heard all that had past, steps out crying, I beg, Sir, you will make no stranger of me.

But be it, Britain, thy superior praise,  
*To vanquish folly while a smile you raise ;*  
 To shield the mental from the feeling sense,  
 Nor suffer mirth at modesty's expence.  
 E'er since a jest was introduc'd on earth,  
 Conceit has been the greatest bane to mirth ;  
 A vain opinion will supply the place  
 Of nature, genius, elegance, and grace ;  
*And though the self-applauded fool appears,*  
 An ass, deficient only in his ears,  
 Yet he himself opines he should be plac'd  
 In the first ranks of elegance and taste,  
 A trifling genius is a dangerous thing,  
 It mends not manners tho' it leaves a sting ;  
 Rashly to try untutor'd humour bent,  
 We joke unthinking, and compel'd repent.  
 A man of sense will judge each witty stroke,  
 With the same spirit that its author spoke ;  
 Nor seek in minute parts slight faults to  
     find,  
 And leave the essence of the jest behind ;  
                                     But



But in such jests as neither please nor  
hurt,  
When silly coxcombs harmless malice  
spurt;  
Yawn not, but let the place with laughter  
ring,  
Not at the wit—but folly of the thing.  
Whoever thinks a faultless jest to hear,  
Thinks what ne'er was—nor is—nor shall  
appear.  
In every joke regard the joker's end,\*  
If wit, the elegant, and poignant blend;

C 3

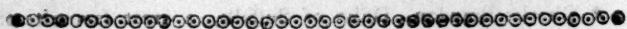
And

\*\*\*\*\*

\* Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, a great favourite of  
Harry the Eighth, married that King's sister, the Queen Dow-  
ager of France, having been the wife of Lewis the XIIIth; his  
aspiring to be great a Princess, shewed an extraordinary ambition,  
and drew upon him the envy of the courtiers; to abate this in-  
some degree, without derogating too much from his own dignity  
and merit, he made use of a pretty device; for at tournament in  
honour of his nuptials, he appeared in the lists with trappings

on

And if the tenor of the joke delight,  
 A trivial or a casual error slight.  
 A decent Quaker, temp'rate in his joys,  
 Who hated coxcombs as he hated toys ;  
 In praise of silence eminently loud,  
 Vain of humility—of plainness proud ;  
 Was brought with ease, by repartee or jest,  
 To doat upon what else he wou'd detest.  
 Blest with a son declining days to cheer,  
 And happy in two hundred pounds a  
 year ;  
 Plac'd out his darling boy to learn a trade,  
 To friend *Ezekiel Sly*, a cunning blade :  
*Sly* taught the boy his business bit by bit,  
 But made him perfect in a roguish wit.



on his horses, half frize, half cloth of gold, having this motto  
 embroidered thereon :

Cloth of gold do not despise,  
 Tho' thou'rt match'd with cloth of frize ;  
 Cloth of frize be not too bold,  
 Tho' thou'rt match'd with cloth of gold.

The

The boy with prudent shrugs, and artful  
sneers,

A wonder of sagacity appears ;  
His seeming great desert to recompence,  
And animate to future diligence,  
A suit of cloaths is order'd to be made,  
To decorate our hypocritic blade ;  
The son, whose vanities were not a few,  
Had much more taste than what his father  
knew ;

And as the cloaths were order'd to be  
plain,

He lac'd them from his own illicit gain ;  
The honest father, who detested beaus,  
Demanded how he come to wear such  
cloaths ?

Sir, *I created them*, the wag replies ;  
Created them ! say how, the father cries ;  
With an arch sneer, rejoin'd the cunning  
blade,

*I said let them be made, and they were made ;*

A par-







By quaint expressions some would gain our  
praise,

But where they ought to please, they but  
amaze ;

We lose the jest, while we consult the  
phrase ;

Such labour'd nothings often make us stare,  
Though not the shadow of a meaning's  
there.

Most by the look give sentence on the  
jest,

If the look's grave—no matter how exprest ;

The wink of archness—the conceited leer,

The tofs significant, and bridle queer ;

The limbs distorted, the position odd,

The twisted features and sarcastic nod ;

Though feeble haws their yawning efforts  
join,

And ten low hums bid flagging sense de-  
cline :

Who



Who can endure the same unvarying tone,  
As if the tongue was lab'ring with a drone;  
That when the end lets patience out of  
thrall,

The jester is the greatest jest of all.

'Tis not enough, no rudeness gives of-  
fence,

A polish'd diction must enhance the sense;  
Keen is the jest which with politeness flows,  
It charms the object which it wou'd ex-  
pose\*;

But when low gibes in rugged language  
roar,

Recoiling they the rude inventor gore.

\*\*\*\*\*

\* A nobleman having presented King Charles II. with a fine horse, his Majesty bid Killigrew, who was present, tell him what his age was; whereupon Killigrew goes and examines his tail; what are you doing? says the King; that is not the place to find out his age. O, Sir, said Killigrew, your Majesty knows one should never look a gift horse in the mouth.

When

When pedants aim the antique jest to  
throw,

Affected garments technic terms bestow ;

Unlike good-humour elegantly plain,

Which probes the vicious mind, but gives  
no pain.

Avoid extremes, and shun the fault with  
care,

Of such as rashly carry *jest* too far ;

Nor at a keen retort conceive offence,

And magnify the spleen of self-defence ;

Some double meanings, others puns despise,

Sarcastic jeers, or strokes ironic prize :

Thus each as passion or opinion guides,

On wit as beauty partially decides ;

To fix bright fancy on one spot presumes,

Whose beams extended, ev'ry part illumines.

Some who for jokes are never at a stand,

Steal all their wit—and jest at second hand ;

But

But wit at second hand will sometimes fail,  
Then in its stead pert nonsense must pre-  
vail;

We see the dull thro' imitation err,  
And oft the wit by being singular;  
*Those* are so scorn'd by *these*, that thro'  
mere spite,

*These* will be wrong, if *those* by chance be  
right;

Against conviction insolently prate,  
And lose the cause by being obstinate;  
\*So forgers use their writing talents ill,  
And are but hang'd for having too much  
skill;

D

To

\*\*\*\*\*

\* A rich farmer's son, who had been bred at the University,  
coming home to visit his father and mother, and being one night  
at supper with them on a couple of fowls, he told them, that  
by



To some what's bright at noon is dull at  
night,

But yet they think the last opinion right;  
These wit esteem, like children toys for  
play,

What's priz'd this hour, the next is thrown  
away;

While their weak brains, in raptures with  
each tale,

Waver like weathercocks with ev'ry gale;  
The reason of such fickleness explore,  
They'll tell you that they're wiser than be-  
fore;

\*\*\*\*\*

by logic and arithmetic, he could prove those two fowls to be  
three; well let us hear, said the old man—Why this, cried the  
scholar, is one; and this, continued he, is two; two and one, you  
know, make three: since you have made it out so well, said the  
old man, your mother shall have the first fowl, I will have the  
second, and the third you may take for your great learning.

If

If thus they still improve in their career,  
 They'll soon as bright as wisdom's self  
 appear.

When James the First reign'd in Eliza's  
 stead,

False wits in shoals this pedant Isle o'er-  
 spread;

Who play'd on words, with most fantastic  
 skill,

Was deem'd as blest with wond'rous wit at  
 will;

By all degrees of men true wit was shunn'd,  
 The lawyer quibbled and the parson punn'd;  
 Oft leaving what is naturally spoke,  
 The current fashion proves the ready joke;  
 And punsters think it neither shame nor sin,  
 To pour out nonsense if it raise a grin.

Some fain wou'd make, whose modesty's  
but small,

Their own conceptions be a rule for all ;  
And fondly, like opiniated elves,  
Think they praise others when they praise  
themselves.

Pride, envy, dullness, against *Sterne* arose,  
In lordlings, coxcombs, wou'd-be-wits and  
beaus ;

But wit surmounted each attack of spleen,  
And smiles extorted e'en from dulness'  
queen ;

Might he return to bless once more our  
isle,

Blockheads wou'd criticize, and fools  
revile ;

Or, should *Cervantes* start up into life,  
Dullards wou'd quickly shew their malice  
rife ;

Envy



Envy will like a bailiff way-lay merit,  
But still it proves with genius it had credit.  
Soon as the brilliant jest you comprehend,  
Be prompt to smile, and foremost to commend ;

Lest it should seem that you're by envy  
stung,  
Or want of penetration' holds your tongue.  
Short is the date of jokes that turn on  
words.

As winter sunshine, or as autumn birds ;  
Then not on sound alone but sense depend,  
Which will from time the brilliant thought  
defend ;

Malicious jokes, in which some men delight,  
Atone not for the anger they excite ;  
In youth 'tis arrogance that prompts to  
spleen,

In age thro' petulance the same is seen ;

What is the spleenish jest, ill-nature's toy,  
 With which we love our neighbour to annoy;  
 'Tis most our enemy when most severe,  
 And makes the rancour of the soul appear;  
 Friendship is hard to gain, and lost with  
 ease;

Then cease to irritate, and aim to please;  
 You are by such malicious jest or pun  
 Sure to be hated, and sometimes undone.

If wit from folly so much undergo,  
 Ah! let not malice too commence her foe;  
 Brilliant good-humour'd wit demands ap-  
 plause

\* Good-humour, tho' less brilliant, praises  
 draws;

Now

\*\*\*\*\*

\* Three jovial tars, enjoying themselves over their bottle,  
 happened to be talking of happiness, one swore if he could but  
 have





Good sense should to benevolence submit,  
 And smiling candour vanquish frowning  
 wit.

But if in men of wit some dregs of  
 spleen,  
 Join'd with the ruling passion, still are  
 seen ;  
 Discharge that rancour to reform the times,  
 Not on small follies, but notorious crimes ;  
 For jests obscene no pardon can be found,  
 Tho' in the sentence wit and art abound ;  
 But dull obscenity must surely prove  
 Ridiculous as eunuchs making love.

In Charles's easy but lascivious reign,  
 When wit turn'd libertine in pleasure's  
 train ;

Each courtier polished and refin'd his jest,  
 But still the thought indecently exprest ;

All







His wit was tun'd, if rightly we explore,  
 To make a field—but not a table roar;  
 With swords his enemies from grief he  
 free'd,

With mortars punn'd, with cannons repar-  
 tee'd;

His bon-mots bombs—his quibbles hidden  
 mines,

And his supreme enjoyment, martial lines;

Of'times his fame hath, in the darkest  
 night,

Amaz'd all Europe with a blaze of light;

But all his foes declare his jokes were such,

As could not please his polish'd neighbours  
 much.

*Anna*, in whom all female virtues shone,  
 Secur'd by *arms* her art embellish'd throne;

The

The scholar's time now martial labours  
share,

Wit follow'd camps, and fought for glory  
there ;

While he to whom dread carnage gave  
delight

Appear'd the studious, learned, and polite.

Thus in commanders wit and prowess seen,

Conduc'd to raise the glory of the queen ;

The lustre of all former annals drain,

You'll deem this reign the most immortal  
reign.

Now faction rises—now the arts decline,  
And sol's bright beams with fainter lustre  
shine ;

Oh ! may once more the happy age appear,

When wit was polish'd and the jest sincere ;

When humour, not pedantically crude,

Scorn'd to be low, and hated to be rude ;

\*Nor

\*Nor suffer'd public rage nor party spite,  
 To banish pleasure from the social night;  
 Convivial joys shall then each Briton bless,  
 And prudence banish malice and excess.

\*\*\*\*\*

\* One Captain Broughton, (who lived by his wits) visiting a friend in the Tower, about dinner-time, his friend being absent, in his walk he saw divers dishes of meat and bottles of wine, carried up to a Lord's lodging, and immediately after followed the guests, amongst whom the Captain puts in with the rest, and sits down to dinner, where he eat and drank freely; but the Lord had often an eye upon this stranger, and seeing him very familiar, after dinner, he enquired of the guests, whose relation he was: which the Captain hearing, boldly salutes him in these words, My Lord, do you know me?—No indeed, said the Lord; quoth the Captain, sure you do my Lord, for you and I have been in all the prisons in England:—How! said my Lord, I never was in any but this of the Tower in my life;—True, my Lord, answered the Captain, and I have been in all the rest. At which jest my Lord and Company laugh'd heartily, and said he was welcome.

E

When-



Whene'er your jests offend, your jesting  
 cease;  
 And speak with diffidence e'en when they  
 please ;  
 Without good breeding jests would irksome  
 grow,  
 Politeness friends creates, but makes no  
 foe ;  
 Think not true wit by jesting will be  
 mov'd,  
 Who merit praise can bear to be reprov'd.  
 When you'd bring folly to the test of rules,  
 You place yourself on footing with the  
 fools ;  
 Then let the brainless but conceited skull,  
 Be vain unscourg'd, and uncorrected dull ;  
 Blockheads with wit you'll ne'er from folly  
 call,  
 For who can joke so long as they can bawl ?  
 Never

Never to malice prostitute you name,  
 Nor think the plaudits of your spleen are  
 fame.

Give me the man whose wit ne'er gain'd  
 a foe,  
 Who shoots politeness from good-humour's  
 bow ;  
 Who lets no joke with social manners clash,  
 But gives impartially the smiling lash ;  
 Candour with polish'd wit in him unite,  
 At once to blend improvement and delight ;  
 If one accomplish'd thus by chance you meet,  
 Embrace him to procure a mental treat.

7



T H E  
C O N T R A S T ;

O R,

The Joke and the Jest  
In small compass exprest.



*Life is a Jest.*

CONTRACT

OF

THE

...

...





III.

The brisk coquet politely fwears  
 That love ne'er touch'd her breast,  
 But her encreasing shape declares  
 Her vows are but a jest.

IV.

Look all around, observe the great  
 With goods of fortune blest,  
 Unhappy in their high estate,  
 Their blifs a trivial jest.

J O K E.

# J O K E.

## I.

The wily subject too pretends  
 His stratagems to cloak,  
 That he disinterested bends,  
 But, oh! he breaks a joke.

## II.

The levee-hunter gave his praise  
 To all his lordship spoke,  
 But said he any witty phrase?  
 No,—that is all a joke.

## III. The

III.

The swain avers, with tongue quite glib,  
 His vow shall ne'er be broke,  
 But soon a most egregious fib,  
 Declares him but in joke.

IV.

The poor and mean again observe,  
 Who feel Fate's heavy stroke,  
 With mirth abounding, tho' they starve,  
 Till death concludes the joke.

THE



[ 51 ]

T H E  
L A W S  
• F  
L A U G H I N G.

•••••

**L**AUGHING is that noble faculty  
which distinguishes man from beast,  
which shews the rationality of the soul,  
that can be moved independent of the  
senses; it is the mark of reason, the badge  
of

of good-humour, and the sign of mirth.

*Shakespeare* says,

“ The man who hath not music in himself,  
 “ And is not mov’d with concord of sweet sounds,  
 “ Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.”

And we may with as great truth affirm,  
 that

The man who is not of a merry mind,  
 And is not mov’d to laughter by a joke,  
 Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.

It is said of the Roman *Cassius*, that

“ He seldom smil’d, or smil’d in such a sort,  
 “ As if he scorn’d himself that could be mov’d  
 “ To smile at any thing.”

Now this fellow *Cassius* always lived a  
 melancholy life, and at last died a murder-  
 derer;

derer; but the man who lives laughing generally dies in his bed, as an honest man ought.

With respect to laughing we should consider three things.

|            |   |                                |
|------------|---|--------------------------------|
| The Person | { | Who laughs                     |
|            |   | Who is laughed at              |
|            |   | And what the laughing is about |

When a man tells a tale, or speaks a jest, he should laugh inwardly, and enjoy the joke in his mind more than his countenance; for the man who laughs aloud at his own joke, is in the court of Comus looked upon as a fool. The Emperor of Persia, of whom I am going to relate a

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pretty



pretty tale, I will be bound to say, enjoyed his own joke upon the occasion much better with a serious countenance, than he could have done with distorted features, and a thousand ha! ha! ha! has!

*Sba Abbas*, the renowned King of Persia, was the most accomplished Prince in all the East; it happened that a Turkish ambassador one time at his court, being much concerned to see Christians, as well as Mahometans, wearing green shoes and trowsers over all Persia; he in the name of his master, required the King to forbid his subjects any longer to profane a colour which all true mahometans ought to have a greater veneration for; that the King knew very well, that it being the Prophet's

ple's peculiar colour, it did not become the happy observers of his law to cover any part of the body therewith, but only the head, or at least the more decent part of the body above the waist; it being an insupportable contempt to trample under foot a colour so sacred, as his subjects not only did, but also the Giacers, or Christians, the Jews, and all other infidels and impure nations in his dominions.

*Sba Abbas* perceived the folly of his discourse, and so resolved to make a jest of it; he made shew of consenting to the Grand Signior's desire, and promised the ambassador that he would take care to order that his subjects should no longer prophane the Prophet's colour, hoping

the Grand Signior would issue out the same orders over his dominions.

For, said the King, your master beholds every day a greater prophanation of that colour, and yet lets it go unpunished; my subjects only wear the colour dead, upon their shoes and trowsers, but all the beasts in Turkey dung without any penalty upon the grass, which is the living colour that Mahomet loved; therefore if he will prohibit all the beasts in his empire from defiling the green grass with their excrements, which they do continually, then I will take care that my subjects shall wear green no longer.

The ambassador, finding the Emperor did but deride his folly, withdrew silently  
from



from the presence, and left the Persians to their own liberty.

When a mother tells you a merry story, you may be allowed to make a little noise in laughing, since it is a kind of compliment to the speaker, and a grinning approbation of his story; but never break into the middle of a story by laughing, since the interruption is very disagreeable, both to the speaker and auditors;—besides, you ought to save all your merry ammunition for the end of the tale.

Laughing not only increases the good humour of society and promotes good fellowship, but is of infinite service to the health—and has sometimes sav'd the life of sick persons, as the following story will prove.

Doctor

Doctor Radcliffe was remarkable for a sudden thought in extraordinary cases: he was once sent for into the country, to a gentleman who was dangerously ill of a quincey, and the Doctor soon perceived that no application internal or external would be of any service, upon which he desired the lady of the house to order her cook to make a large hasty pudding, and when it was done, to let his servant bring it up:—while the cook was about it, he takes his man aside, and instructed him what to do; by and by the man brings up the pudding in great order, and sets it on the table, in full view of the patient. Come, John, said he, you love hasty pudding, eat some along with me, for I believe you came out without your breakfast. Both fall to with spoons, but  
 John's

John's spoon going twice to his mouth to his master's once, the Doctor takes occasion to quarrel with him, and dabs a spoonful of hot pudding in his face;—John resents it, and throws another at his master;—this puts the Doctor in a passion, and quitting his spoon, takes it up by handfuls, and throws it at his man, who battles him again in the same manner, till they were both of them all over in a most woeful pickle—the patient who had a full view of the skirmish, was so tickled at the fancy, that he burst into a laughter, which broke the quincey, and cured him.

Laugh and be fat, is a common saying, therefore I would recommend laughing to the consumptive, ill conditioned, and splenetic,



netic, as a certain cure for their disorders : if you are laughed at, don't be angry, that will but encrease the laughter of those who jeer you,—but try to retort jest for jest, and joke for joke,—and if a story is told to expose any of your follies, amend by the tale; and at the same time tell a story, if you can, to expose some folly peculiar to the person who attempted to expose you, that he may improve by it likewise.—Thus laughing will be of mutual benefit; and good humour and instruction go hand in hand.

A retort has great force, since it takes away the sting of a former jest, and establishes your reputation for a ready turn of wit.

Thus

Thus when the pay of a certain regiment in France had been kept back for a long time, one of the Captains belonging to it, being greatly pushed for money, and much discontented, went to the Colonel, and said, three words with you, Sir, *Money or Discharge* :—The Colonel immediately replied, four with you, Sir,—*neither one nor t'other*.

But the best way not to be four when joked upon, is to try to gain such an ascendancy over your passions, as to be always in a good humour with yourself,—for which purpose, take the following story.

A beautiful young roving God went into a nation of humpback people; when he  
entered

entered the capital he was surrounded by a multitude of the inhabitants, who derided and taunted at him most unmercifully, and would have proceeded to greater violence, had not one wiser than the rest, cried out, “ my friends and countrymen ! what are you going to do ?—let us not insult this unhappy piece of deformity,—if heaven has lavish’d upon us all the gifts of beauty ; if it has adorn’d our backs with a mountain of flesh,—let us be filled with gratitude, repair to the temple, and turn thanks to the Immortal Gods.” This is the History of human vanity ; for to succeed in any country, we must carry the

the hump of the nation into which we  
travel.

That

Ill humour may cease,  
And laughing encrease,

Is the sincere Wish of

SAMUEL SMILEWELL,

F I N I S.



[ 63 ]

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